



LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF PUPIL SERVICES

Office of Special Education
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April 22, 2020

Dear Ms. Tropf:

Thank you for your letter, dated April 12, 2020, in which you provided input on behalf of the LCPS Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) regarding the School Division's plans for students with disabilities during this period of remote instruction. As you know, SEAC is a valued voice in our School Division's conversations about addressing the needs of students with disabilities. I appreciate you bringing to my attention the questions SEAC has received from families of students with disabilities regarding LCPS' April 8, 2020 letter announcing the development of Temporary Distance Learning Plans (TDLPs). Due to the constantly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the uncertainty surrounding when schools will reopen for regular student attendance, there are questions and concerns that parents have raised that cannot be answered with specificity.

Please know that the Office of Special Education has carefully reviewed the feedback SEAC has provided and LCPS will seek to provide updated information to our families as soon as it becomes available. Although we are scheduled to meet today for our regularly scheduled monthly SEAC Chair, SEAC Vice Chair, Director, and Assistant Superintendent meeting, I thought providing a response in writing would be appropriate as well.

What is a Temporary Distance Learning Plan?

A TDLP is an individualized plan designed to support students with disabilities participating in LCPS' Continuity of Education Plan for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. This document outlines the specific goals, accommodations/modifications, and special education and/or related services that LCPS proposes to make available to a student during this period. The TDLP will be implemented in lieu of the student's current IEP, which is not functionally available during the School Division's closure as a result of the COVID-19 health emergency. The TDLP will be individualized for each student to address the student's needs and individual circumstances.

How will a Temporary Distance Learning Plan Be Developed?

A student's special education case manager will develop an initial draft of a TDLP to collaborate with families for review and feedback. Each case manager will develop this initial draft based on a review of the student's current IEP, based on a review of the student's Continuity of Education Plan program, and based on the feedback of additional members of the student's education team. Parents/guardians and adult students will be provided with a draft TDLP individualized for the student and have the opportunity to provide feedback and/or consent for implementation of the draft plan.

Will all Temporary Distance Learning Plans Include the Same Goals, Accommodations, and Services?

No. Every TDLP will look different because each plan will be individualized to address the unique, disability-related needs of a particular student. LCPS has not identified any minimum or maximum thresholds for what can or should be included in a TDLP. Families should be assured that a TDLP will provide students with disabilities appropriate specially designed instruction in light of the student's current circumstances.

Can Parents Provide Input Regarding the Contents of the Temporary Distance Learning Plan?

Absolutely! Parents/guardians and adult students are critical partners in the successful implementation of LCPS' Continuity of Education Plan. LCPS welcomes the input of our families as we work to develop and finalize each student's TDLP. Either prior to or immediately following the development of the initial draft of a TDLP, each family should receive a telephone call from their student's special education case manager offering to discuss the TDLP. During this call, parents/guardians and adult students can share any questions or concerns they may have regarding the contents of a student's TDLP. If a phone call cannot sufficiently address a family's concern(s), the family may request a meeting to further discuss the TDLP.

In your letter, you requested clarification about why LCPS is not convening IEP team meetings to discuss the contents of a student's TDLP. A family may request an IEP team meeting at any time to review the contents of their student's TDLP. LCPS is aware, however, that many families may not have the availability to participate in an IEP team meeting at this time due to remote work and childcare responsibilities. For a family who is not able to participate in an IEP team meeting at this time but would like for their student to receive accommodations and support during remote learning, LCPS will not require an IEP team to meet to begin the implementation of a TDLP.

What Happens if a Parent Does Not Sign the Temporary Distance Learning Plan?

LCPS will not implement a TDLP without the written/verbal consent of a student's parent/guardian or the adult student. In the event that a parent/guardian or adult student will not provide consent to a proposed TDLP, students will continue to have access to the remote programming that is available to all students in LCPS. Additionally, if a parent/guardian or adult student does not provide consent to a TDLP, then school staff will attempt to make available appropriate accommodations and modifications to the student based upon the accommodations and modifications contained within the student's current IEP.

How Long Will LCPS Implement a Student's TDLP?

LCPS plans to utilize TDLPs through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. It is our hope that schools will reopen for normal school attendance at the beginning of the

2020-2021 school year. At that time, a student's last agreed-upon IEP will be reinstated. In the event that schools cannot reopen for normal school attendance at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, LCPS will reevaluate available options at that time.

I am hopeful that the above information has addressed many of the issues raised in the April 12, 2020 letter from SEAC. The Office of Special Education thanks SEAC for its partnership as our community continues to navigate this very challenging and unprecedented period. We look forward to providing a digital platform to facilitate a parent information session and the May 6 SEAC meeting. More information about the session and meeting platforms will be provided to you when it is available.

Sincerely,

Pat Nelson, Ed.D.
Director